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## INDUSTRIAL TRAINING IN EDINBURGH FOR CRIPPLED BOYS AND GIRLS

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For thirteen years organized work for crippled boys and girls has been carried on in Edinburgh, Scotland, by the Edinburgh Cripple and Invalid Children's Aid Society. All of the features of this association's work are helpful, but some are so unique in character that the experience should be of general value and be likely to find application elsewhere.

To gain an idea of the field of operation it may be recalled that Edinburgh, the capital of Scotland, is a city of well over 300,000 population. The community is largely industrial in character.

The various activities of the society will be separately described.

*Home for Girls.*—The Nellfield Girls' Home for crippled girls, founded in 1872, antedated the organization of the society, but is now maintained as a branch of its work. It accommodates sixteen girls, most of the residents ranging in age from three to eleven years; they receive lessons from the matron, who is a certificated teacher. Several older girls are taught dressmaking. The Home is located at 21 Coltbridge avenue.

The work is followed up by the Old Nellfield Girls' Committee, which endeavors to keep in touch with all the girls who have been for-

merly in residence at the home. This committee assists the girls to obtain each year a fortnight's holiday in the country, and aids necessitous cases in other ways. Most of the girls, however, neither expect nor receive such material help.

*Home for Boys.*—The Home for Crippled Boys at 22 Viewforth Terrace accommodates fourteen residents. Board at \$1.25 weekly is charged here, as also in the girls' home, but in needy cases this is provided by outside contributors. The age limit is fourteen years.

*Visitation of Cripples.*—Since the founding of the society in 1902, the work of visiting cripples in their own homes has been one of its principal activities. Each year a number of invalids—children who are unable to attend school and whose parents have neither time nor talent for teaching—are given instruction regularly twice, and in some cases, three times, a week. Two examples were recently recorded to show the value of this work. "A little boy, nine years old, too delicate to start school at the usual age, has benefited so much from his visitor's teaching that on going to school this autumn he was put in a higher class than the average child of his age is fit for. Another lad, so crippled that he can never go out, was taught basket-making last winter, and not only has he now an added interest in life, but he has already earned a considerable sum of money." The society has a long list of volunteers for this work on its rolls.

*Parlor Meetings.*—The so-called cripple parlors, a feature of work unique to Great Britain, are held fortnightly in various sections of the city. To these meetings, which are largely

social in character, the crippled children come for entertainment, companionship, and profit. Instruction is given in sewing, drawing, painting, basket-making, etc. Toys and games are provided for those too young to take advantage of the classes. There is also an industrial center at which the older boys and girls are taught dressmaking, carving and basket-making.

*Clubs for Cripples.*—The girls' club meets fortnightly from October till May. There are classes in sewing, embroidery and singing, and a lending library for the girls' use. A summer holiday is arranged for.

The boys' club meets weekly during the winter, carrying through some systematic program. In the summer a camping party is organized.

*Relief and Assistance.*—Orthopedic appliances and artificial limbs are provided for cases requiring them. Whenever possible the parents pay part of the cost. The society also loans or rents at a small fee special carriages and invalid chairs. Milk, medicine and coal are given in necessitous cases. During the year the society sends delicate children to convalescent homes in the country.

*Industrial Work.*—It is this feature in the activity of the society which is of particular interest. In Edinburgh, as elsewhere, were found grave difficulties in obtaining employment for cripples. The system developed solves the problem, at least to a certain degree. In 1905 a boot-repairing shop was established, and later a separate workshop for tailoring, dressmaking, and toymaking. In connection with the opening of the latter workshop the follow-

ing statement of experience and principle was made.

For crippled boys and girls the problem of employment has always been serious, and especially is it the case in these days of keen industrial competition.

An important part of the society's work is in helping those who leave school to find work.

It is found that they resolve themselves into two classes — (1) those who after training may be able to take their place in ordinary workshops and become self-supporting; (2) those who will probably never be fit to enter ordinary workshops or to work for long hours, but who are able to do work under favorable conditions, and at least partly support themselves.

Even those in the first class find great difficulty in getting employment as apprentices, although, if trained to a trade, openings are more easily found.

With this in view a boot repairing shop was opened some years ago. This shop, now at 13 Brougham street, is doing good work both in repairing and making, and its turnover is steadily increasing. Nine boys are employed under a competent foreman, while a number who have been trained in the shop are doing well in other boot shops.

A large number of the crippled boys are not physically fit for boot repairing, and to help these a tailoring branch is now being opened in the new workshop; while, for girls, dressmaking is to be taught — in both cases under the charge of capable instructors, and in conditions as nearly as possible those met with in ordinary workrooms. It is hoped that in both tailoring and dressmaking a good deal of work in repairing will be given. In commencing, employment will be given to five or six boys and an equal number of girls.

For the more helpless class it is proposed to start in a few weeks the making of toys and nursery furniture, with rug making, so that, though unable to find work in outside shops afterward they may be able to do work at home or in the workshop, and so be able at least partially to earn a livelihood. In this department there is room for about ten boys and girls. Altogether, about twenty boys and girls between the ages of 14 and 20 will probably be started in work during the first year.

Rented premises, well lit and with open surroundings, have been secured on the first floor of 13a George street, and every care has been taken in adapting the building, with due regard to economy, to make it healthy and pleasant.

For those who cannot go home for their midday meal, a hot dinner is being provided at a small charge.

At present no provision of boarding accommodation is being made for those who are homeless, but it is hoped that before long it may be possible to add this.

A word might be said for those who are too infirm to move out of their homes, and who do knitting and such work at their homes, but find it hard to get a market for it. Their need is, from the nature of things, less apparent, but none the less real. Orders for their work will be gladly received at the workshop.

The work of the boot-repairing shop is considered to have been satisfactory. In view of the fact that the primary purpose is constructively educational, the financial statement is encouraging. This expressed in dollars, and in round figures, is as follows:

Year	Earnings	Expenses	Deficit
1905.....	\$. 135	\$ 580	\$ 445
1906.....	645	954	300
1907.....	670	995	325
1908.....	790	1,240	450
1909.....	960	1,450	490
1910.....	1,225	1,585	360
1911.....	1,390	1,740	350
1912.....	2,040	2,360	320
1913.....	2,190	2,535	345

It will be observed that the receipts have steadily increased without a proportionate rise in expenses with the augmented output. It is believed that with a larger turnover the deficit may be wiped out.

The results other than financial must also be taken into account. Since its establishment forty-one crippled boys have been given the opportunity to learn a trade. These are

accounted for as follows: Seventeen are working at their trade under ordinary conditions; of these six are earning from \$5 to \$6.50 a week, and another is in business for himself. Seven are earning from \$2.50 to \$4.25 a week, and three others smaller wages. Twelve proved unsuitable in physique or temperament, but some of these have found other employment. Eleven are still being trained in the boot shop. One died.

In considering the figures given, it must be borne in mind that the cash scale of wages is considerably lower in Great Britain than in this country. According to a recent report: "These boys are instructed by a competent foreman in both the making and repairing of boots, so that at the end of two or three years' training, little difficulty is experienced, in spite of their disabilities, in finding them situations in which they receive an adequate wage and have the opportunity of completing their knowledge of their trade."

The other workshop, for tailoring, dressmaking and toy-making, has not been in operation long enough to show conclusive results. During the second year of actual operation there were three instructors and twenty-four boys and girls on the force, the latter distributed as follows: tailoring, seven boys; toy-making, ten boys; dressmaking, seven girls. During the year the receipts covered about half the expenditures, but this ratio is expected to improve with further operation. "But the value of the workshop to the workers and indirectly to the community cannot be measured in terms of finance. Through sympathetic discipline and application, and the sense of self-respect which



comes from the consciousness of ability to earn, these two dozen boys and girls have been introduced to a larger life, satisfactory at once to themselves and to the community. To be a means of helping toward achieving the qualities and efficiency thus encouraged, is felt to be well worth all the expenditure involved alike in time, in work, and in money." This opinion is undoubtedly sound.

*Employment Committee.*—The industrial work of the society is supplemented by an employment committee, which meets weekly to deal with those cripples under its care who are seeking work. The committee has found from experience that it is especially easy for crippled boys and girls to drift into "blind-alley" occupations. After unsuccessful attempts to find employment, parents are apt to allow them to take any work that offers, and the result is often an occupation which gives a comparatively high starting wage, but has no tendency to develop the workers. It keeps them employed until they are too old to enter a skilled trade, and too often they ultimately become casual workers and loafers. The energies of the committee have thus been largely directed—and in many instances successfully—towards helping those who have had an unfortunate start of this kind to find work that will lead to something in the end, although the wage may at first be small. Some have had to be dissuaded from vain quests and advised to seek employment that was at least possible for them. Others, despairing and discouraged, have had to be urged on to keep searching for work. The efforts have been more than usually successful. At the end of a recent year the situation stood thus: About



73 per cent. of the boys of working age under the society's supervision were doing some work; 17 per cent. were unfit for practically any kind of work, and 10 per cent. were able to work, but were unemployed. The percentage of girls out of work was about the same, but the number of those unfit for work was greater. Among those working, however, were a good number whose occupation was only partial, some for whom it was temporary or unsuitable, and others who were depending for help on the sale of products produced at home.

It only remains to say that there are always between six and seven hundred cripples under the care of this excellent society at any time.

The conclusions which have manifestly been drawn from experience in the work described are probably of practically universal application in industrial work for crippled children. There are a certain class of cripples who can make their way with the minimum of assistance under ordinary conditions of employment; and there is another class that is unemployable, that is, practically unfit for any work. But between these two classes is a third class of considerable numbers whose unsucccess, as regards self-support and consequent self-respect, can be turned into success through the expedient of a shop philanthropically subsidized, offering special conditions of employment, adapted to the individual handicaps of the workers.

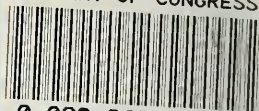
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